

THE CLEVELAND
MUSEUM OF ART
11150 EAST
BOULEVARD
CLEVELAND, OHIO
44106-1797



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Contact: Adele Z. Silver

**Gruener Collection of Pre-Columbian Art, Gift to the Art Museum,
Goes on Exhibition February 4 - November 8, 1992**

To commemorate the encounter in 1492 between the cultures of Europe and the Americas--the "Old World" and the "New"--The Cleveland Museum of Art is exhibiting for the first time a selection of the Pre-Columbian art collection given and bequeathed to the Museum by James C. and Florence Crowell Gruener. Principally interested in West Mexican ceramic sculpture and stone sculpture from Veracruz, the Grueners also collected significant works of Maya, Zapotec, and Olmec art, and gold work from Costa Rica, Panama, and Colombia.

The Gruener works join the Museum's collection of more than 300 works of art created by cultures in Mexico and Central and South America during the centuries before Columbus and other Europeans came to the New World. The Museum's Pre-Columbian holdings include works of extremely high quality, making it one of the most important in the United States, to which the Gruener gift adds both quality and variety.

Of the more than 250 works that Mr. and Mrs. Gruener gave and bequeathed to the Museum over fifty years of collecting, approximately fifty are on exhibition in Gallery 102, the popular gallery near the Museum Cafe. Many of these works will eventually be exhibited in the galleries devoted to the permanent collection of arts of the Americas (galleries 107, 108, and 109.)

Evan Turner, director of the Museum, says, "The Grueners' exceptional generosity to the Museum and its audience prompted them to collect in areas that would be of special value in the Museum holdings as well as of particular interest to them," an assessment with which Margaret Young-Sanchez, assistant curator responsible for the Museum's pre-Columbian collection, concurs: "Knowing that Mr. and Mrs. Gruener wished the Museum to have the art they were collecting, we were able to buy in other areas. It is the kind of unselfish concern that has motivated many donors to the Cleveland Museum." A number of works from the Gruener collection have gone to the Museum's Extensions Division, which circulates works to schools, community centers, and libraries throughout the Greater Cleveland area.

Works in the special exhibition include:

- A standing man and woman (1990.266/7), an important pair of Nayarit painted ceramic sculptures, made for burial with the dead, dated about 100 BC-AD 500. The woman carries a vessel, indicating her domestic role, and the man, a warrior and provider, carries a spear.
- A figure of a serene and beautiful seated woman (1990.270) is a painted ceramic of the same date.
- A square, vigorous carving in coarse volcanic stone (1990.136) pays homage to the Aztec patron of music, feasting, and pleasure.
- A Mayan stucco head (1990.183), among the finest of the Gruener gifts, dates to the years 600-900 and is probably a portrait of a member of a royal family.
- A carved jade Pendant mounted in delicately cast gold (1983.190) was a gift from Mr. Gruener to the Museum on the occasion of his wife's death.
- Among other important and appealing works in the exhibition are a beautifully carved pottery face which is a fragment of an effigy urn (90.275) from Oaxaca, and a portrait head stirrup-spout vessel (90.227) from Peru's North Coast.

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For additional information or photographs, please contact Adele Z. Silver, Public Information, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland OH 44106; 216/421-7340.